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Palmerston NDIS participant Ian Fraser said having employment supports in his plan is what helped him to secure paid work at Bunnings.

In his last few years at school, the now 20-year-old was able to engage Northern Territory service provider YouthWorX NT to help him build his life and employment skills.

‘When I left school I really didn’t know what job I wanted to do,’ Ian said. ‘I have autism, so all I knew was I was a hands on type of guy who liked helping people out.’

Finding it increasingly difficult to engage with people, Ian’s confidence was plummeting.

‘It’s always been difficult for me to talk to people. I know what I wanted to say in my head, but I just can’t get the words out. It was easier to avoid conversations,’ he said.

Also receiving occupational and speech therapies through his NDIS plan, Ian’s youth development coach, Keidan Holt, said the once shy guy isn’t anymore.

‘Ian has certainly come out of his shell. Every time I see him he’s improving. It really shows in the way he presents himself socially and at work. I’m really proud of him,’ he said.

To get to this point, Keidan set up regular one-on-one employment coaching sessions with Ian.

‘We talked about what he wanted to do, we set some goals, then we put some steps in place for Ian to reach those goals,’ Keidan said.

‘We put Ian through a few courses. He got his First Aid Certificate, his Construction White Card and completed a Certificate I in Developing Independence.

‘We also got Ian some work experience to see what it was he wanted to do. Then we used all those experiences, achievements, and professional relationships to include in his resume.’

Ian said it was good to have support to do his certificates and to test out a few jobs.

‘I spent some time at a cabinet making place 2 days a week. I learnt a lot – how to use different tools for all the different work. I did a bit of painting, sanding, and drilling too,’ he said.

‘I also did work experience at Coles, at a garden place and I did a course at Woolworths. I volunteered at PAWS, Foodbank, at festivals and at a Crocodile Park. I was supported to try a lot of different things.’

Ian said it was an organised guided industry tour which really made him want to work at Bunnings.

‘Keidan took a few of us there and a Bunnings team member showed us around the store,’ he said.

‘We were shown how they did things – how the store operated, all the different areas, their health and safety rules, to give us an idea of what a job at Bunnings looked like.

‘It thought I wouldn’t mind a job there. It looks like a really good place to work.’

Given Ian had shown an interest in a job at Bunnings, Keidan said they got to work immediately.

‘We made Ian a Bunnings profile and let the store know he was looking for a job there. Then we saw a job come up, so Ian put his resume in,’ Keidan said.

Not long after Ian said he got ‘a shock’ when he was called up for an interview.

‘Keidan helped me to prepare. We did some mock interviews then next thing the interview came along. I must have done pretty well because next thing I got a call to say I got a job. I couldn’t believe it, but here I am.’

Now 2 months into his new team member role, Ian is loving his new job and he’s settled in well.

‘I’ve been working in different areas but mainly I’ve been replenishing stock,’ Ian said.

‘All the trucks come in with supplies. I get everything off the pallets and sort it out into the different areas. Then I fill up the cages and take the stock over to the aisles it needs to go in.’

Punctual, hardworking, respectful, and polite, Ian’s dedication is certainly paying off.

‘Bunnings has offered me more work, a part-time contract in the plant and garden aisles. I’m stoked,’ he said.

‘The best thing about working at Bunnings is going outside and doing stuff. It’s an actual job!

‘If I didn’t have my school, my NDIS planner and Keidan helping me out, I wouldn’t have been able to get a job on my own,’ he added.

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